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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the preliminary findings of a study of the perspectives of four student teachers toward social studies teaching in the elementary classroom. Perspectives are defined and profiles of the student teacher observed. The study focuses on three questions: What conceptions of social studies did these student teachers hold at the start of their field experience semester? What were their perspectives toward social studies during their student teaching experience? and What factors influenced the development of these perspectives? The four student teachers were chosen from an elementary teacher program at a large midwestern university through recommendations of professors and the use of an inventory designed to determine students' views on teaching issues. Data were collected over three months from a series of at least four observations in the social studies classroom, six personal interviews, an interview with the cooperating teacher, and results from several instruments. Conclusions drawn from the study showed student teachers' perspectives of social studies teaching cannot be understood separately from their perspectives on teaching and learning in general and the goals they set for themselves and their class. Also, each student teacher defines his or her student teaching situation in a particular way. An implication of the study is that research on teaching should focus on what teachers think and how this interacts with their teaching behavior. (Author/NE)

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

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Elementary School Social Studies:

The Development of Student Teacher Perspectives

Introduction

This paper reports the preliminary findings of a study of the perspectives of four elementary school student teachers toward social studies teaching. Perspectives are defined and offered as a way to gain greater insight into social studies teaching. Profiles of the student teachers observed are presented along with several tentative conclusions and implications for teacher education.

Research in Social Studies

As social studies educators and scholars survey their field, they are often struck by the myriad of curriculum approaches. Indeed, throughout the twentieth century, scholars have sought to create an over-arching definition for social studies and a statement of the field's purpose and goals. But there has been little consensus among scholars and the academic debate has continued unresolved. We might ask, however, what this scholarly debate has to do with actual classroom practice? Although scholars differ about the purposes and definition of social studies, many generally agree that social studies should teach skills, and lead students to be actively involved in learning. If scholarly thinking about social studies is implemented in the classroom, we would expect to find there this orientation of active reflection.

However, recent research on the status of the social studies (Morrisett, Superka & Hawkes, 1980; Shaver, David & Helburn, 1979; Gross, 1977), has concluded that actual classroom practice is very different from that advocated in the scholarly literature. According to these findings, the dominant model of social studies instruction is teacher controlled recitation and lecture. The textbook is the predominant instructional tool. The knowledge expected of students is largely information oriented. "Content and classroom interactions are

typically used to teach students to accept authority and learn 'important truths' about history and government" (Shaver et al., 1979, p. 151).

Although this research on the status of the social studies has been far-reaching and informative, we would do well to look beyond the general trend it reports. Case study data (Gross, 1977) suggest the diversity and unpredictability of social studies education in America today. And it is this which brings us to the classroom teacher. Repeatedly, researchers on classroom practices in social studies point out that understanding the teacher is the key to knowing and understanding what happens in the social studies classroom.

What then, do we know about the social studies classroom teacher? The SPAN project gives us some demographic data: the kinds of degrees held, length of classroom experience. We have some survey data about teachers' feelings toward and perceptions of social studies. We know, for example, that most social studies teachers feel qualified for their jobs, that they regard inadequate reading as a major problem, that they feel they do not receive adequate help in getting information about instructional materials (Superka et al. May 1980, p. 308). We read that teachers' primary concerns are with management and control. Few teachers, the research indicates, are influenced by research, in part because they are unreceptive to views from the 'ivory tower' or university. Teachers fear that inquiry or action-oriented curriculum will have adverse affects on management and control and are frustrated by students who cannot deal with active learning (Morrisett, 1980, p. 563). Teachers' major concerns, according to the research, are with socialization and control (Shaver, et al. 1977).

Furthermore, although the terminology of the various trends in social studies has 'percolated' down to the teacher (Gross, 1977, p. 200), there is little evidence that this terminology affects actual practice. Talk about inquiry, or decision-making may be little more than slogans which have slight bearing on actual practice.

What we have then is an overview, a general idea, about teachers' concerns and frustrations. But we know very little about the intentions and beliefs which underlie practice. I would argue, then, that we don't really know much about this 'key' to social studies education. We ought to ask how practitioners, rather than scholars, give meaning and purpose to social studies and how these meanings, rather than scholarly definitions , give direction to classroom practice. In doing so, we acknowledge that teachers are complex human beings with inner lives, ideas and beliefs, who make choices in a social world of constraint and possibility.

Perspectives

A concept of teacher perspectives can serve as a useful tool for thinking about teachers' beliefs and ideas. Perspective here may be defined as "the matrix of assumptions by which an actor makes sense of his world" (Hammersley, p. 9). This definition helps us to make a necessary distinction between abstract statements of belief and the assumptions which serve as guides to behavior. Unlike more abstract statements, perspectives are a kind of "operational philosophy" developed out of experiences in the immediate and distant past, and applied in particular situations.

Teacher perspectives are the assumptions teachers follow in their teaching activity; they are the meanings and interpretations given to their work and their work situation. Perspectives take into account how the school and classroom is experienced and how this plays back into the teacher's background of beliefs and action.

A useful way of thinking about and understanding the complexity of teachers' perspectives is offered by Ann and Harold Berlak (1981) who suggest conceptualizing teachers' perspectives as ongoing resolutions to a set of dilemmas.

These dilemmas represent competing 'goods', or conflicting pulls which underlie observed behavior. Inconsistent behaviors can be understood as alternative modes of dilemma resolution. For example, a teacher may talk about the need to allow children to make decisions about the activities or the curriculum they engage in. She may also stress the role of the teacher in structuring classroom activities and curriculum. And she may act on each of these assumptions when teaching. This 'contradiction' may be represented as a dilemma of "high vs. low degree of control claimed by teachers over pupil action."

The Pre-Service Teacher

A study of perspectives toward social studies might justifiably focus on experienced teachers, new teachers, or pre-service teachers; this research has focused on the latter. The field experience of a pre-service teacher is generally regarded as a formative period in a teacher's career. This research sought to examine the relationship of the field experience to preparation for teaching social studies in the elementary school. Literature on field experiences and social studies teaching generally is not very illuminating. The major focus has been on the effectiveness of particular training techniques designed to get student teachers to successfully use certain teaching strategies (Grannis, 1970). But this doesn't tell us anything about how these student teachers incorporate these experiences into their thinking about social studies or their future practice.

Most research on teacher education argues that student teachers tend to shift in the direction of greater concern for custodial and management problems during their field experience. This literature often points to the powerful influence of cooperating teachers and the school bureaucracy in moving student teachers toward a control ideology. It suggests that students who begin their field experience with a concern for teaching students to think critically and

to become actively involved in social study, will shift toward a more conventional approach to social studies under the press of the institution and the cooperating teacher.

Methodology

Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to investigate, through case studies and cross case analysis, the development of student teachers' definitions and interpretations of social studies in the elementary school classroom. The study focused on the following questions:

1. What conceptions of social studies did these student teachers hold at the start of their field experience semester?

   -this question focused on broad statements of belief and as such served only as a starting point for looking at the meanings and interpretations given to social studies.

2. What perspectives toward social studies did these student teachers express during their student teaching experience?

   -this is the key question--what are the meanings and interpretations they give to their social studies teaching?

3. What explanation for the development of these perspectives may be offered?

Design

For indepth study, four student teachers were selected from an elementary teacher education program at a large mid-western university. Student teaching at this institution takes place during a full university semester and occurs during the final semester of a four semester professional sequence. The four students selected were four whose conceptions of social studies were characterized by:

a. a process orientation--a desire to involve students in the processes of critical thinking;

b. an emphasis on personal knowledge--seeing worthwhile knowledge as that which allows pupils to make sense of experience as opposed to a body of information and facts accepted by a community of authorities;

c. a desire to involve students in curriculum decision making;

d. a view of social studies as part or potentially part of an integrated school curriculum;

e. an emphasis on the use of a variety of resources.

The sample was selected through the use of a propositional inventory designed to determine student views on the above issues and through the recommendations of the students teachers' social studies methods professors.

The research took place over a three month period. Data were collected through a series of observations and interviews. Each student teacher was observed teaching social studies lessons a minimum of four times during the semester; often non-social studies teaching was observed as well. A minimum of six interviews, spaced throughout the semester, were conducted. In addition, each cooperating teacher was interviewed for his or her perceptions of the student teacher. Finally, each student teacher completed several instrumentd designed to elicit his or her conceptions of social studies.

The observations serve as data and in addition were crucial in providing a concrete focus for the teachers' talk about social studies. Each observation was followed by an interview probing the student's thoughts on the conduct of the lesson observed and on the teaching experience in general. More structured interviews were conducted at the beginning and the end of the semester. These interviews, not based on particular observations, probed the student teachers' understandings of rationales for teaching social studies and what they thought ought to go on in the social studies classroom. In addition, these interviews explored the general value orientations and background characteristics which may have been influential in the formation and development of perspectives.

The data have been analyzed on two levels. One level of analysis has been the preparation of individual profiles describing each student teacher's perspective toward teaching and toward social studies as it emerged during the student teaching semester. The second level has looked across the cases at the similarities and differences among the people observed. The individual profiles show how abstract ideas about social studies developed into (or were replaced by) ideas about what is actually appropriate in the classroom. As each student teacher developed his or her definition of the teaching experience, particular dilemma resolutions and perspectives emerged. The comparison and contrast dimension of the analysis has focused on a few key issues or dilemmas.

Although the data analysis is still in progress, this paper will offer some tentative findings based on the individual profiles of each student teacher. It became apparent during my pilot study[1] that perspectives toward social studies could not be examined without some attention being paid to each student teacher's perspective toward wider issues of teaching, including perspectives toward children, learning and the teacher's role as well as toward knowledge and curriculum. The profiles, then, point to the dominant dimensions of each teacher's perspectives and illuminate the ways in which these dimensions play into their thinking and practice in social studies.

Findings

The central figures of this study were four student teachers: Sally, Laura, Peter and David. Each came to this student teaching experience with a unique background and, despite an apparent similarity in ideas about social studies, a unique set of beliefs about teaching and learning.

SALLY

Sally began her student teaching experience with both enthusiasm and anxiety. More than once, she expressed the concern that she "wasn't ready to teach;" but

she also repeated her determination to be a teacher: "I like teaching. I want to do it." Sally had worked as a legal secretary for several years after she graduated from high school, consequently she was a few years older than most of her peers in the program. In addition, she had had a good deal of experience working with children through church and community orgainizations as well as volunteer political experience. Her field experience placement was in a fifth grade classroom at Whitefield School, a placement she chose because of the "diverse" student population there.

Despite her age and experience, the major themes in Sally's teaching perspectives during her student teaching related to her developing sense of teacher identity and her relationship with her pupils. For Sally, student teaching was a time of uncertain identity, not quite a teacher, no longer a student. During this time, she was self-consciously both a teacher and a learner, coming to grips with her own sense of authority and developing confidence in her own expertise.

Perhaps Sally was typical in her concern with discipline and authority. Perhaps she was typical also in her move toward greater control over her pupils' time and activities. But to see this movement as unrelated to her own intentions, as resulting from the press of institutional forces, would be to miss the dynamic interrelationship of her past experience, her beliefs, and the current situation.

On the one hand, Sally was very attracted to structure, order and control. Throughout the semester she developed ways to establish the structure and order she believed were necessary for a productive learning environment. Indeed, she complained several times that her cooperating teacher was not structured enough and that she chose to establish greater control than he over classroom lessons and behavior guidelines. On the other hand, Sally was also attracted to the notion that children must control learning if real learning is to take place: "Hopefully, they'll carry the ball, keep learning and wanting to learn."

She was unsatisfied with her early relationship with children. If they misbehaved it was because she was too lenient "I've let them walk all over me." It was the teacher's responsibility, she explained, to control the classroom and the learning environment. But a good teacher must be responsive to children, she must be flexible, caring and patient--not merely an autocrat. And so Sally came to her teaching with a propensity for both high and low teacher control of children's activities. Although her teaching behavior appeared as movement toward greater teacher control, it may more accurately be characterized as finding a middle-ground, a satisfactory resolution, at least tentatively, to a dilemma of control.

By the end of the semester she had become more comfortable with and accepting of her role as authority and adult, while at the same time she was beginning to find ways to establish an atmosphere in which pupils might be stimulated and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. She sought a resolution to the dilemma of control in which she could maintain order and establish structure while at the same time respond to children.

While the overriding theme of Sally's perspectives toward teaching focused on her development of the teachers' role, it is instructive to say something about other aspects of her perspectives toward teaching before describing her perspectives toward social studies. Her talk about teaching reflected a concern with the diversity and individuality of the children. Although her lessons often had all the children doing the same thing at the same time, she explained that she was striving to use a variety of materials and to implement a variety of activities so that all the children would have access to the information and concepts being taught. Furthermore, she argued, it is important to get children actively involved in the learning process. Learning best occurs when children are stimulated by and activly involved with their environment.

It is the teacher's function to structure the learning environment in a way

that provides stimulation and the opportunity for involvement.

Sally's conceptions of social studies knowledge were characterized, like those of the other student teachers, by a view of knowledge as personal, process-oriented and integrated. But the dimensions of these conceptions, when examined in relationship to actual teaching, reveal more complexity of thought and intention. Sally believed, and attempted to implement the belief, that knowledge must be personally meaningful to the knower. To Sally this meant, first of all, the development of empathy in children, empathy for people of other times and other places. Giving pupils a sense "of what it was like to live then" was crucial, in Sally's thinking, to really understanding history or other social studies. Sally, who said she loved history, commented that "for me, the best way to understand is to picture myself in that time period."

Personal knowledge also meant that children's experiences must be incorporated into the curriculum. Ways must be found, argued Sally, to make the social studies curriculum something that touches children's lives. With this in mind, for example, she had her pupils construct a "personal time line" as a way of introducing them to an historical time line.

But curriculum isn't only that which is personally meaningful to the children. She was also attracted to a concept of public knowledge; that is, that there is a body of information, facts and skills which is accepted as worthwhile by a community of scholars. While espousing and acting on a view of knowledge as personally meaningful, Sally also taught a publically accepted curriculum. She never questioned whether it was worthwhile for children to learn about New World exploration, only how she might make this body of knowledge personally meaningful to children.

Similarly, a view of social studies as process oriented is counter balanced by belief that content is important. She wanted children to learn a process of

asking questions, of gathering and evaluating information and of reaching conclusions. But she also was concerned that they develop general background knowledge--that they learn content. Sally was vague on just what that background knowledge entailed. She often used the term awareness- children ought to be aware of history and of current events, but facts to be memorized for their own sake are just going to be forgotten anyway. Sally was attracted to both a content and a process approach to social studies. Rather than contradicting herself, she saw the two as interrelated:

> "I **think** awareness is really a big thing and learning that there are ways to act on that. And then acting, the ultimate, hardest thing to do."

Sally also acted, to a certain extent at least, on her conception of social studies as part of an integrated curriculum in which there was considerable overlap in the skills, content and concepts of various disciplines. During her student teaching, she had full responsibility for only one social studies unit. Her design of this unit integrated creative writing and research skills with social studies content. At the same time, there was clearly a period of time designated as social studies, a discipline separate and apart form other disciplines.

The dominant aspects and dilemma resolutions of Sally's teaching perspectives were apparent in her concerns and teaching of social studies. In the Exploration unit which she developed and taught, Sally was concerned with having well-structured and well-planned lessons. She set up a resource center on explorers in her room rather than having the students find materials in the school IMC. Her lesson on the construction of a time line took pupils through a step by step procedure. She also spent a good deal of her planning time trying to think of ways to present material which would capture her pupils' interests and be meaningful for them.

The teaching methods she used during this unit were diverse--reflecting her concern with the need for a variety of activities in order that each unique child might learn. In short the social studies she taught was not simply a reflection of her abstract ideas about social studies or even of her resolutions to dilemmas about knowledge and curriculum. We must take into account the general pattern of her concerns for and understandings of her student teaching experience.

LAURA

Like Sally, Laura also said that teaching was something that she'd always wanted to do. She had started college as an engineering major, largely under pressure from other people who told her she could "do something more than teach." But, she said, "I didn't like the fact that I couldn't work with people, especially kids...It was just a matter of doing what I wanted to do instead of what other people thought I should do." Still, Laura pointed out, the idea of going on to law school or possibly business still appealed to her.

Laura chose to do her student teaching in a sixth grade class at Riveredge School because, she had been told, the children at this school came from diverse and sometimes troubled backgrounds. She was anxious to work with children who "just seemed to <u>need</u> more, more love or more attention. Then you can make more of a difference with them." This desire to work with individual children, especially those with problems, was a strong factor in her view of teaching and the teacher's role.

But equally important was her concern with order and structure. Unlike Sally, and indeed unlike many student teachers, Laura was not uncertain about the authority she wanted in the classroom, and discipline was rarely a problem for her. She implemented an ordered view of the classroom which was comfortable and, apparently, appropriate for her. Her preference for a highly structured class-

room was reflected in the thoroughness and detail with which she prepared lessons, the care which she took to state and enforce classroom rules, and the specific directions and supervision she gave to students as they worked. It is important to note that Laura saw herself as developing responsibility in children, not as simply enforcing the rules of the institution.

But although Laura was attracted to a high degree of teacher control over pupil activities and time, she was uncomfortable with the possibility of creating order at the expense of creativity and independence. She tried to build into the curriculum (which was largely established by a school committee) some opportunity for student creativity: "I hoped that they would take what they learned and apply it to something creative of their own." But the students seemed confused by these activities and had trouble working on their own. "I think I spoon fed them too much with the map packets that we did," Laura commented after her lessons were less than successful. During her student teaching experience Laura was comfortable with a high teacher control resolution of this dilemma. However, her concern with encouraging pupils to work independently and creatively suggests the potential for movement to a more integrated position.

Another, and related, aspect of Laura's perspectives toward teaching was her concern with the school as an organization. Again this does not mean that she saw her role as one of merely carrying out institutional mandates and guidelines. However, she repeatedly noted that it is important to coordinate curriculum across grade levels and to have an institutional set of expectations and goals which everyone adheres to. In fact, during her student teaching experience, communicating with other staff members was important to her--she worked on curriculum planning teams and talked with other reachers and the counsellors. To Laura, communication and interdependence with other staff people was an important part of being a professional.

Laura's concern with order and with organizational structure are both reflected in her perspectives toward children and learning. The idea that children are in school to prepare them for adult life is a salient element of Laura's thinking about teaching. "You can't ask them to decide their life right now, but you can sort of ask them to start thinking about it." Indeed, school should not only prepare students for adult life, but early schooling should prepare children for later schooling: "I think the goal (of middle school) is to prepare them for high school." This is, of course, entirely consistent with her thinking about schools as coordinated organizations. The children within these organizations are to be prepared for what comes later within the system, as well as for the time they leave it.

Laura's concern with individual problem children is indicative of her perspective toward children as unique. She spoke about children as individuals. She gave individual children a good deal of attention outside of class. "I don't think of kids in groups," she commented during our last interview, "but as individuals." However, in her actual teaching, Laura was attracted toward a view of children as having "shared characteristics." That is, generally, children were all taught the same thing at the same time. During her student teaching semester, Laura resolved this dilemma by making a distinction between her relationship as a teacher with the whole class and her relationships with them as a helping adult out of class.

Again, this general overview of Laura's teaching perspectives shed light on her practice and beliefs in social studies. To Laura, social studies curriculum is personally meaningful in that it prepares children for adult life. She stated that it's important for children to realize that:

> "before too many years they are going to be part of the voting population that decides these things."

Furthermore, much of what Laura would label social studies, although not taught during the time officially designated social studies, is that which deals with young people's problems: "We try to be alert to the problems kids are having. If it's something that affects a lot of kids we can bring it up in class." Laura stressed that a primary emphasis in social studies for her would be values education and personal development.

While leaning toward an attraction toward personal knowledge, Laura's teaching and talk about teaching indicated a strong attraction toward knowledge as certain rather than problematic. The lessons I observed consisted of the teacher presenting information which the pupils would write down and later apply. This is consistent with her perspectives toward control and order, toward childhood as a time of preparation for the years to come and toward a concern for the organization, for preparing children for the next grades.

Interestingly, while Laura's conceptions of social studies as indicated on her inventory, showed a tendency to see knowledge as process oriented, this did not enter into her talk about actual teaching. The lessons she taught had a content emphasis and she never talked about teaching children thinking skills. Laura defined inquiry in social studies as "a way of learning through asking questions." But, she added, "I don't know how to teach someone to ask questions."

During her student teaching semester, Laura saw knowledge largely in terms of information and facts to be learned for their own sake. She rarely spoke of long range or overriding curriculum goals. The goals she did set for social studies came more from her broader perspectives toward teaching than from any particular conceptions of social studies. Her desire to work with troubled children seemed related to the stress on the importance of personal development as part of the social studies curriculum. Her attraction for order and structure in her own teaching and in the organizational structure were reflected not only

in how she taught but in why -preparing children for later grades, developing responsible behavior, and what -the emphasis on certain knowledge.

PETER

> "The elementary classroom seemed like a place where you could do a lot of different things as an adult...yet still be doing a job that contributes to the common good."

Peter entered his student teaching experience with a varied school, work and play background. At 27, Peter had been in and out of school and had worked at a variety of jobs from driving a school bus to construction work. He entered education because he saw the elementary school classroom as a perfect outlet for a man with diverse interests and a desire for socially responsible work. To Peter, teaching was a job to which he could bring himself and still have the time and energy to pursue those interests which he could then in turn bring back to the classroom.

Peter did his student teaching in a 4-5 classroom at Woodland School. He chose this particular classroom because his observations there suggested it was a place where he could "try and do some integration." In fact, this theme of integration was an overriding one for Peter. "I guess I've seen myself as a real integrator," he said. The classroom was to him a place where diverse interests and knowledge should be connected to one another and to the real world.

Despite his own initial apprehension, Peter seemed like a natural in the classroom. His cooperating teacher noted; "He came into it as a strong, together person. It was more like working with another experienced teacher." Unlike many student teachers, Peter did not have to struggle with classroom management or with defining his relationship to the children. Teaching was for him an opportunity for self expression and learning as well as for teaching. His perspectives toward teaching may have reflected a greater maturity than those of the other student teachers I observed. They were characterized more by a

concern for learning and curriculum than by concerns for developing a comfortable teacher role and learning to relate to children.

Although Peter saw teaching as an opportunity to express himself, he did not view teaching from an ego-centric point of view. Rather, in his teaching he strove for a dynamic interrelationship between his own interests, needs and personality and those of the children.

> "I like to think that you take the interests of the kids and because you have more knowledge, more background, you can build that into a meaningful educational experience."

In this way, Peter sought to resolve the dilemma of high vs. low teacher control of pupil action in a tranformational way, finding a balance between teacher and pupil control.

Important to Peter's thinking is the idea that learning is, to a large extent, a collective endeavor. Peter believed that learning best takes place when people are motivated by and learn from interaction with others.

> "I saw a poster in someone else's room which said, 'together we are smarter than any one of us'...When they say "how are we supposed to know, we don't know anything about..' and actually they start putting a few things together and I'll be damned, they know something!"

Children, as well as teachers, can stimulate and contribute to one anothers learning.

The idea that knowledge is integrated and that school knowledge needs to be connected to life are essential to Peter's talk about social studies. Making "connections between otherwise isolated and meaningless facts and knowledge" is, said Peter, basic to his philosophy of education and of social studies. These connections are crucial to real learning and, this being the case, perhaps social studies ought to be the focal point for the classroom, providing what Peter called the "greater context." Both Peter and his cooperating teacher pointed out to me that there was a lot more social studies going on than indicated by the formal curriculum and that this 'incidental social studies' provided

the main thread of the classroom. Activities which they viewed as social studies would arise from and connect to almost anything the children might study. A math lesson might lead to activities on consumer issues. A novel some children read led to learning about Oriental carpets and some history and geography of the Middle East. Letters to and from pen-pals in Norway led to learning about Norwegian people, customs, and language.

Peter, then, was strongly attracted toward a resolution of knowledge as personally meaningful and it is social studies which helps make the connections between school knowledge and "real life systems." The theme of connecting learning in school to 'real' life recurs throughout Peter's talk about teaching and curriculum and is demonstrated in his teaching as well. Peter's cooperating teacher noted that one of Peter's strengths was that "he tried to make the lessons meaningful to them as 10 and 11 year olds, not just a body of information they were given by an adult or a textbook that they are expected to memorize."

Furthermore, in Peter's perspective, knowledge which is personally meaningful primarily emphasizes knowing as a way of thinking and reasoning. Each lesson I observed presented the children with open-ended questions or problems, something to 'figure out.' It was not sufficient for children to learn the process of inquiry, Peter, in addition, encouraged children to develop a critical stance toward knowledge. He spoke of knowledge as problematic and taught in a way that would encourage skeptical questioning. It is important, he explained, that children learn not to put too much faith in experts but learn to examine evidence, ideas and values for themselves.

Peter's conceptions of social studies as evidenced on the social studies inventory and during out first interview, were given greater meaning in the context of his teaching experiences and beliefs. He chose teaching because he saw the classroom as a place to develop his wide range of interests rather than having to specialize. And so was strongly attracted to knowledge as integrated--

to not making artificial distinctions between domains of knowledge and to relating knowledge to life and to the children. He sought to establish connections not only among what was being taught but among the learners as well, by structuring and supporting group learning and interaction. He sought, throughout the semester, to actively engage the students in learning and teaching, as he himself was engaged. Finally, he had chosen to work in a classroom where he perceived it would be possible for him to implement his teaching philosophy.

DAVID

David began the teacher education program after some dissatisfaction with majors in engineering, journalism and psychology. An introspective, thoughtful and religious man, David was eager to develop in young people the ability to use their minds. He spoke often of wanting to stimulate a "joy of learning" in the youngsters he worked with. A joy which would come as learners were enabled to discover things for themselves.

David did his student teaching in an eighth grade English - social studies classroom at Riveredge School. He chose this school specifically because he wanted to work with 'older kids' and because he wanted "to work with kids who are heading down the road to trouble." In addition, he felt that this cooperating teacher was teaching social studies in a stimulating way which was compatible with his own goals: "Getting the kids to process information and draw conclusions seemed worthwhile to me."

For David, student teaching turned out to be a frustrating experience. He was frustrated by what he perceived as his pupils' passivity and lack of interest. David was forced to face conflicts between his ideas and hopes about teaching and his actual experience. Unlike the other student teachers I observed, David was unable to come to a satisfactory resolution of the dilemmas

of teaching he faced during this experience. This irresolution is illustrated in his thinking about the role of the teacher. In keeping with his ideal of joyful learning, David, in our talks, showed a strong attraction toward resolving dilemmas of control in the direction of low teacher control claimed by the teacher over pupil action. The ideal learning environment would be characterized by "having them decide what they want to do and showing them how to go about doing it."

But David's idealized notions of teaching and learning were contradicted by his actual experiences in the classroom. He found children who, it appeared, were unmotivated to learn. At the same time David believed that school is a place where learning must take place. Hence, while it would be ideal for students to have a high degree of control over their activities and time, there "has to be some way to insure that work is taking place." Ideally there would be "no need for telling them what they have to learn without giving them any choices. But that's difficult to do in a situation where they have to learn." And indeed, the lessons I observed were all tightly teacher structured and implemented, and consisted primarily of lecture and worksheets.

The resolution of high teacher control was not a happy one for David. His original conceptions about ideal learning did not change and he was uncomfortable with his teaching practice. He regarded his role as teacher as too coercive for real learning, although necessarily coercive given the (perceived) demands of the school. Perhaps, he argued, there is an essential contradiction in requiring children to attend school and expecting real learning to take place--you can't learn what you're being forced to learn. At the same time he felt an obligation to assume a coercive role to "insure that real learning was going on." He felt pressure to "cover the material," to be "sure that children learn." Yet he explained, and his cooperating teacher confirmed, that he had a good deal of leeway in deciding what to teach. David's <u>assumptions</u> about what the

school demanded seem to have been more important than actual constraints imposed at this particular school. And so while David wanted learning to be joyful and uncoerced, he felt the need to assume tight control over learning although, to his own mind, this would destroy the "joy of learning."

David's relationship with his pupils was characterized, on one hand, by respect and consideration. As his cooperating teacher noted, "He looked at it as sort of a relationship between two people, one of which was educating the other." But David was also reluctant to develop personal relationships with his pupils. Despite his expressed interest in working with troubled children, he was careful not to intrude where he felt he may not have been wanted. While maintaining respect for the children, he kept some distance from them and never seemed to arrive at an understanding of them or of his relationship to them.

David was similarly perplexed about how to motivate children's learning. He believed that real learning had to be intrinsically motivated, but he daily faced the reality of a seemingly unmotivated class. And so, although David would like to have facilitated self-motivated learning, he was at a loss as to how he might stimulate motivation. The pupils, said David seemed only to enjoy "filling in blanks and things." While this was unsatisfactory to him, it was what he had them do. He felt he was unable to successfully ask them to do anything else.

Again, in David's view the problem lay more with the nature of schooling than the nature of children:

> "Because you can't learn when someone is telling you to generally. You can see how little kids care. They're only here because they have to be."

Interestingly, David, like Peter, felt that school should be connected to "real life" to be meaningful. But when asked whether he could make those connections in his own classroom he replied:

> "I don't know. You could theoretically, I don't know if you could bureaucratically. I've heard of people who try to start things like that. The principal or somebody says 'you have to do this.' So they hurry up and do that and if there's some time left they do what they wanted to do."

David's perspectives toward social studies were similarly characterized by frustration and unsuccessful dilemma resolutions. He felt, on the one hand, that knowledge should be personally meaningful and useful. But on the other hand, he was concerned that children learn the concepts and information he saw as basic to the discipline. The study of history, in itself, ought to stimulate pupils' 'sense of wonder,' ought to be meaningful for them. And yet it was readily apparent to David from the beginning of the semester that most pupils simply didn't care about the history he was trying to teach. David, as teacher, would like to have been the vehicle for making public knowledge personally meaningful, but he was unable to find a way to do so.

Similarly, David was very attracted to a process resolution of the process-content dilemma. He talked about the importance of teaching "thinking skills" and trying to get pupils to make inferences. At the same time he was concerned that his students learn information, the facts and theories laid out in lectures and texts. And yet, although observation of his teaching showed a strong tendency to emphasize knowledge as content, his talk about his teaching showed that this too was not satisfactory. Throughout the semester he was unable to find a way to integrate the two ends of the dilemma.

Aspects of David's ambivalence were shown in his talk about social studies knowledge as integrated. On the one hand, he argued , integrating disciplines is a good idea since in our ordinary thinking we don't make distinctions. On the other hand, maybe it would be better to teach social studies (and other disciplines) separately so as to be sure not to neglect or short change one area.

David's perspectives toward social studies could not meaningfully have been determined by simply knowing his conceptions or ideas about social studies and teaching. Only in the context of the particular classroom, did the ambi-

valence and uncertainty which characterized his thinking and his actual teaching emerged. I should add that David ended the semester without working out these conflicts to his satisfaction and did not intend to go into teaching.

Conclusions

This study began by asking three questions:

-what conceptions of social studies do these student teachers hold?

-what were their perspectives toward social studies?

-what factors seem to have influenced the development of these perspectives?

The first question essentially asked about the nature of the beliefs about social studies which student teachers brought with them to their first full-time teaching experience. Each student I observed was asked to define social studies--both in writing and during interviews. Apparently defining social studies is not as great a concern for teachers (or at least student teachers) as it has been for scholars. Each interviewee gave the term a very broad and general definition. "To me there is no definition because it involves so many things," said Sally. "To me, social studies is dealing with man in general, his past, his present, his future," Laura explained. For Peter, social studies "encompasses almost anything." And David argued that social studies is, "The study of the interaction of people on a personal, community, society, national, and international level."

We also talked about why they thought social studies ought to be part of the school curriculum. Three of the four student teachers emphasized the importance of learning social studies to become "educated people." Each talked about the importance of having pupils gain "knowledge", "understanding" or "awareness." Although each was uncertain about just what knowledge or understanding it would be important to have children learn. Only one of the four

talked about the importance of social studies to help pupils make informed and rational choices. Although two others did say in other contexts, that voting and citizen involvement were important long-range goals. David questioned whether there was any practical value to social studies--given the nature of our society and decision making processes. But he still advocated including social studies in the school curriculum.

But these beliefs, these abstract ideas about social studies, only begin to suggest what social studies teaching is all about to these four people. During the semester we (each student and the researcher) probed the background of the assumptions which guided their teaching of, and concrete thoughts about, social studies. At this point in the data analysis several conclusions about these perspectives, briefly described in the last section, can be noted.

First of all, it became readily apparent, even during my pilot study, that perspectives toard social studies or knowledge and curriculum more generally, cannot be understood separately from the teacher's perspectives toward teaching and learning in general. Assumptions about social studies alone--about, for example, the nature of social studies knowledge as personal or public, certain or problematic--did not fully illuminate their practice in social studies. Only in relation to their broader range of assumptions about teaching, learning, and schooling in general could social studies teaching begin to be understood.

Second, it is important to note that each student teacher observed and interviewed defined his or her student teaching situation in a particular way. The perspectives of each may be characterized by an overriding theme or themes. Sally struggled with developing her teacher identity, with becoming comfortable in the teacher role. Laura's perspectives were characterized by her views on structure and order and by her concern for working with troubled youth.

Peter's perspectives were dominated by the theme of 'connections.' And David's perspectives were characterized by his concern with joyful learning and by the contradictions he perceived between the ideal of teaching and the reality. These themes played into their perspectives toward teaching and in turn into their perspectives toward social studies.

A third important point is that the perspectives themselves are complex and dynamic. The concept of a dilemma proved to be a useful one in thinking about and characterizing the perspectives each student teacher held. Although these teachers tended to resolve these dilemmas in one direction or another, the attraction toward the other side of the dilemma was often apparent. Rather than view this attraction as contradiction or inconsistency, it seems more useful to acknowledge that people often hold apparently contradictory ideas and beliefs, the various aspects of which are called up in specific situations. The concept of dilemma allows the researcher to understand and describe the dynamic interplay of ideas, experience and context.

Finally, this research considered the question of what factors might influence student teacher's perspectives toward social studies. It was clear that it was not simply the institution of the school or the force of the cooperating teacher which molded these student teachers' behavior in social studies. These teachers came to the teaching experience with ideas about the nature and experience of schooling which existed prior to their student teaching experience. These ideas, along with their own personal histories and agendas, were important factors in shaping their thinking and behavior in the actual classroom situation. Indeed, it may be that social studies more than many other areas, is one place where the teacher can bring herself or himself to the curriculum, especially in the 'incidental' or informal social studies curriculum.

However, it would be a mistake to argue that personal biography and beliefs were the sole determinants of the teachers' actions and ideas. Each

student was able to point to aspects of his or her student teaching experience which, to some extent, at least, shaped or directed teaching. Sally talked about how difficult children sometimes were; she explained how important it had been to have a supportive cooperating teacher who encouraged her to experiment, to try out ideas, and to reflect on their consequences. Laura explained that she was somewhat constrained by the curriculum, which was fairly well defined. As the cooperating teacher explained, "She had X amount of time to get X amount done, so she had her perimeters pretty well-defined." Peter saw the actual task of teaching as both exciting and demanding. He wanted to bring "himself" into the classroom, but found that actually dong so was very taxing: "found it pretty overwhelming in terms of having any time left over for a personal life." Peter was also struck by how he began to assume certain stereotype teacher characteristics:

> "You're going to do some of the same tricks: 'We're waiting for so and so," 'I can't hear what you're saying,' 'Class, CLASS...thank you."

And David was unable to reconcile the reality of the situation with his own beliefs and hopes.

It would be more accurate to say that certain beliefs and assumptions, certain dilemma resolutions, were called up by the teacher's interpretation of the situation and context. David's assumptions about schools, for example, proved to be more powerful than his beliefs about learning, when he actually got into the classroom. Some beliefs are more salient in some contexts than in others; particularl dilemma resolutions may vary with particular situations. Thought and action, then, were filtered through individual assumptions-- assumptions which had been developed in a broader social-cultural context-- and assumptions which defined the possibilities and constraints of the social context.

Implications

At this point in the analysis process, this research suggests implications for thinking both about social studies and about preservice education. I would like to briefly look at each of these.

Research in social studies education has acknowledged that teachers are the "key" to understanding classroom social studies. This study begins to demonstrate the importance of looking at more than the teachers' behavior. As Carew and Lightfoot note:[2]

> 'scrutinizing only their behavior is insufficient because the the same behavior can be governed by quite different motives, and conversely, radically different behaviors can be governed by the same motives."

What teachers know and think, and how this interacts with their teaching behavior, can be a more constructive focus for research on teaching.

But going even further, the complexity of these thoughts and actions seem to belie the use of simple categorization. For, example, to conceive of teachers as either oriented toward teaching a process approach of critical thinking or a content approach emphasizing specific facts and information, overlooks the possibility that teachers may be pulled toward both of these approaches. The question then becomes: how is this dilemma resolved in particular teaching situations and why.

Going still further, not only is it misleading to think of teachers' thinking in dichotomous terms, but it is important, as well, to become aware of the interrelationships of the various dimensions of teachers' thinking. For, example, all of the student teachers I interviewed gave at least lip service to teaching a process of critical thinking. But only one gave evidence of regarding the knowledge derived through this process as problematic. Peter suggested that the text he was using was really "pseudo-inquiry:"

"It's sort of like a treasure hunt, where it's all been laid

> out and you know that if you follow the little steps you're going to arrive there."

Understanding the way a teacher thinks about and implements an "inquiry approach" to social studies ought to involve placing this problem in a more general framework of teachers' understandings and concerns, and the more general network of teachers' dilemma resolutions.

In terms of social studies in the elemantary school, it is interesting to note that both the student teachers and the cooperating teachers indicated that there was more "social studies" going on in the classroom than what may have seemed apparent by the formal curriculum. This observation may have been made to please a researcher interested in social studies. But it also suggests the possibility that for many elementary school teachers, social studies, in some sense, may be, at least implicitly, a thread which runs through the classroom curriculum. What this may suggest for teachers' understanding of social studies is still unclear to me. This may simply be a way of saying that socialization processes are important in the elementary classroom and that much of this socialization can be labelled "social studies." In light of concerns that social studies may be neglected in elementary classrooms in favor of basic skills, this does raise questions about teachers' conceptions of social studies and what they think is it's proper role.

All of this suggests that research in social studies ought to not only focus on teachers but to regard teachers as research partners whose insights into and dilemmas about teaching can be regarded as worthwhile knowledge:

> "Teachers have a unique insider's view into what is going on in the classroom, a view that is at least as valid to understanding the educational process as an outsider's view."[2]

As social studies educators, we are concerned not only with social studies teaching but with the preservice background of perspective teachers as well. Hence some comments about this background are in order.

It would seem worthwhile to see the student teaching experience less as a powerful socializing force and more as a time during which ideas and beliefs about the many aspects of teaching are, probably for the first time, played out in practice. This suggests possibilities about the student teacher's own role in the process of becoming a teacher.

Teacher educators have long been concerned with the problem of helping student teachers to become more reflective and self aware. If we accept the premise of this study--that what teachers think and intend does matter--then this is not an idle problem. Once we acknowledge that the beliefs and experiences of teachers and student teachers do matter, the next question can become how we can develop greater self knowledge and how this can be integrated with a greater understanding of the institutional context of schooling. The Berlaks (1981) argue for critical inquiry as a way to enable teachers to "engage in reflective or minded action" (p. 237).

> "Because teachers day to day schooling behavior cannot be entirely controlled from above, teachers themselves must engage in critical inquiry if we expect schooling to be conducted intelligently" (p. 234).

Perhaps the dilemma language can provide a way to facilitate critical inquiry, to raise consciousnesses. The Berlaks argue that in a process of critical inquiry, teachers, or student teachers, would examine their present patterns of dilemma resolution, consider the alternative possibilities. They would then mindfully consider the possible consequences of present and alternative patterns.

Teacher educators and supervisors could assist student teachers by pointing out possible dilemmas in their talk and behavior and in the process of schooling as well. Together, teacher educators and pre-service teachers could note patterns of dilemma resolution and ask about the origins of particular resolutions, In doing so, they can begin to examine the relationship of their thinking to

the broader culture. Laura, for example, might have begun to consider how her resolution of dilemmas of control in the direction of high teacher control over pupil actions affected her desire to have students engage in creative and independent work in social studies. David might have considered how his resolutions in practice were different from his resolutions in mind and may have begun to consider the consequences of these resolutions and some possible alternatives.

The dilemma language offers a possible way to unite theory and practice. Students come to student teaching with either implicit or explicit expectations about schooling. To see these expectations in light of broader social and cultural themes may encourage them to consider the consequences of their assumptions and the possibilities of alternatives.

Note

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